PALESTINE TODAY

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ELIHU GRANT

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TO

M. G. B. D.

Preface

NEXT after my own dear country in my affection comes beloved Palestine. It has shown me much and as I trust to become an apt pupil I have wished to give tribute. Naturally, being much more of a dreamer than a practical doer my thought of the form of that tribute has resulted in a book. The present peril has constrained me to issue as an introduction to the whole work a commentary on the crimes that are being committed in Palestine against a resident people who have been maneuvered into a position of defence that makes matters look bad for them. My own country as colonies went through a similar period of misrepresentation and misunderstanding. So, today, the native Palestinian farmers, having been subtly attacked in all their dearest prerogatives and after years of futile appeal along decent lines, goaded to resistance, are doing their puny best against great financial and political pressure. Abyssinia, China, Armenia, Spain, these nearly exhaust the tears of the world but the Palestine tragedy is being enacted so near to the front of the stage

and so cleverly that the audience does not notice the craft of the magicians. And magic it is, black magic, hard for the Arab Palestinian to follow or oppose.

What I should really like to do, or to incite some one who is better qualified than I to do, is to acquaint the world with native Palestine, by interpretive paragraphs of its daily living, its thinking and its feelings, its dreams and even its simple crudities. All these are very dear to me and to a million other people and the sight of them bleeding on those hills which have yielded so scanty a subsistence, first under one conqueror and then another, is scarcely to be endured. Then I would gather these paragraphs into one sizable book and place it, bound in delightsome green Morocco on a million library tables in this country. There, my subject which is, geographically, bound by the Levantine shores, would be told in a volume bound in Levant and best of all might lead to a sunrising (Levant) in western hearts.

I had two, long and very satisfying interviews recently with that much-maligned Arab leader, the mufti of Jerusalem, now in exile. The bur-

den of our talk was a deep concern for the common people of Palestine, their well-being in those days, which may God speed, when they are left in comparative peace on their land. Three things His Excellency agreed were of vital importance and the means to secure them for every village in Palestine: better water-supply, simple medical and nursing aids, and such elemental culture as befits an agricultural population. These three, instead of the bitter slanders which publicists have hurled at those peasant folk whose very acres, homes, birth- and burying-places they covet. "Thou shalt not covet." Oh, world, you have not conned well that lesson out of Palestine!

Machine-gunning from air-planes to slay those who oppose you and therefore are called criminals is not a good answer to Palestine. It is not good for those who do it.

Palestine is no place toward which and into which to throw propaganda and the panoplies of war. Let those days and those old fashions cease in their application to one land at least, Palestine. Let Palestine remain in the custody of its population. Let bygones be bygones.

Then let the reverent, the truly devout, or even the curious, of all the world, go as pilgrims, or travelers, to those shrines but let the peace of God obtain in at least one province on this globe where the nations will not tolerate wars nor the lies that pertain to wars.

* * * * *

No matter how impatient some of these paragraphs may seem and that because of years of devotion and a sense of the logic and right of certain living facts, please be advised that the main note is irenic born of a deep love for Palestine and a sincere respect for the best elements and the best intentions among the three outstanding factors of present day Palestine, the Arab, the Empire, the Jew.*

* See the writer's *The Peasantry of Palestine,* Boston 1907, now *The People of Palestine,* Lippincott, Philadelphia: also *Sunlight, a Tribute,* 1935 which treats of peasants.

Palestine Today

No, I did not visit Palestine this year except for those few hours at Haifa necessary in order to take ship for home. Thus I made my quiet protest by keeping away from what to me has been very dear these many years. What do I protest? The meddling by outsiders with the peace of Palestine. /

A great empire is paying a part of its war debt by forcing masses of poor immigrant refugees from Europe into a little helpless province. These refugees, the countries of Europe and America will not receive within their own borders. At Evian les Bains the powers paid lip-service to the expatriate sufferers but would they touch with a little finger the sufferers' need of refuge? No, they would not. But partly relying on certain ancient references in the Hebrew bible—God forgive the nonsense—and under terrible pressure of the most brazen of modern propaganda these nations through their delegates at Evian looked over the wide world and saw no place so convenient as a haven for the

needy, as little Palestine, a land of farmers these thousands of years, citizens who are not consulted in any manner. May manners mend!

And what have we in this much wanted, much meddled-with Palestine? Holy Land to three great religions: Arab land for more than a thousand years. A country of farmers, gardeners, orchardists, and vine dressers: Not the least skillful either. More nearly European in their standard than most countries of farmers which have so recently been under oppressive alien regimes. Some farmers in this world have the fate to live on their patrimony even though it be near dangerous volcanoes or in earthquake zones. Palestine farmers must cultivate their gardens in the very focal centre of the world's desire for they live in holy land. It is certainly holy to them as the ground of their ancestors for many centuries, for they are Arab in the sense that they speak the Arabic language, and owe much to Arabian civilization, but actually they go back to ancestry very much more remote than the Arab in Palestine. Their most distinctive relation is with the Canaanites who were there long before Hebrews, Philistines, or Arabs.

When the Arab conquests threatened to sweep the world these farmers who were then Christians under the decadent Byzantine empire were subdued not only by armies but by a great missionary force. In time most of them were converted to Islam the faith of the Arab, Muhammad, but scores of thousands of them clung to their Christian profession and of those unconverted there are to this day a hundred thousand native Christians whom the world forgets. Surely it ought to appeal to Christian peoples that so sturdy and persisting a Christian population of farmers today should have more consideration in any plans for Palestine's future. True, these are out-numbered by their racial brethren who gave allegiance to Islam. All of these forming one of the most creditable farmer folk in the world should be consulted in any plans affecting their country.

But they are not consulted, their representations and pleas are flouted. Not only are they heavily taxed but they are oppressed with an immigration designed to help solve European problems, an experiment by the European powers enforced by the harshest measures.

When the Palestine native quotes the revolt of the American Colonies in 1776 against taxation without representation he might well add this atrocity which we did not have to endure in those days, viz: than an alien population of immigrants from Europe which has increased from 80,000 to over 400,000 in twenty years and which loudly declares its intention to keep coming until the new ones reach a dominant majority which will take over the political control of the country of Palestine. When this threat, this boast, this determined planning continues in spite of every legal, every civilized protest by the native people of Palestine do you wonder that the situation spells WAR? Do you wonder that the deeply informed who wish for the well-being of all the parties to the dispute, see the failure of the whole mischievous "experiment" which will one day be labelled the crime it clearly is? And this experiment but little over twenty years old is already being spoken of as if it were on a parity with the thousand years of the native title to the country. If the western world cannot see the facts in their relations and tendency, then

the Eastern world will. Perhaps its nearer blood relationship and certainly its religious sympathies will make the whole near East warm to the wrong that is being attempted. Do not all clearly see that whether it be one year, or ten, or a hundred, that the "experiment" is doomed? Along with the "experiment" will go much ruined prestige, faith and friendship. The "experiment" will fail but by the time that fact is clearly seen Palestine may be ruined. One of the loveliest and most loved of the old world gardens of naïve simplicity will have been seared with the ruthless iron of European "improvement." The flesh of Palestine will have been torn from the bones of its hills. The process is going on now. Still there are districts even now that have not felt the full blight of this meddlesome European experiment but even in those valleys lie the corpses of the resisters strafed from the air by British planes in mopping up the fleeing guerrilla warriors who bear two sets of names. To their kindred they are called brothers, husbands, sons, patriots, to the press of the world they are called terrorists, assassins, bandits!

Read such a book as Kenneth Roberts *A Rabble in Arms* describing our experiences with the ancestors of the English who are perpetrating this scandal in Palestine. And, where are those English who are comparable with our friends who raised their voices for us in Parliament and elsewhere in England in the days of George III? Read for answer the article by Major E. T. Richmond in February, 1938 in *The Nineteenth Century and After,* 186-192.

Besides the country people in Palestine there are the city folk, very mingled to be sure, but mainly dependent on the country stock for replenishing, of one blood, race, and language with the peasantry except for the peculiarity of the cities that there as nowhere else there is a strain from the days of the Conquerors of 632 A. D. For the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs antedates the Norman Conquest of England by hundreds of years. As for Jews in Palestine; there were very few when the Anglo-Saxons were coming to the British Isles; very few indeed since the conquests of Constantine the Great, or even since 135 A. D. when Hadrian, the Roman, changed the face of Jerusalem

and its very name. If some European power or mandate sought to come to America to re-establish the Iroquois Indians in New York State we might have a more logical comparison though that would be a kind of bullying less likely to take place.

And who are the native people of Palestine? Way, way in the lead of numbers, a devoted, patriotic Palestinian population, city or country, and that is racially somewhat like the Syrian, a semitic peasantry, not nomads, not wanderers, not tent dwellers, not wild men: Whoever put over that nonsense on this believing world? A people who might most accurately be called Canaanites, descendants of the thousands of years of settled stock living on the land, many thousands in their stone houses and in spite of wars and rumors of wars clinging, clinging to their beloved hills and valleys, their garden plots, grape vineyards, olive orchards, flocks of sheep, goats, their wheat and barley acres, their homes and wives and children with a truly simple acceptance of a hard lot.

Across their little land, like a scourge of the dreaded locusts swept European armies settling

the dispute of continental Europe. Bled, blasted, terrorized, victimized, these simple country folk saw every resource of their impoverished country, moral and physical, sapped by the rapacity of the politicians of the Central Powers and the Allies. Themselves, they were technically the property of the Central Powers but threw their sympathy and their puny but essential strength to the side of the Allies. The victories of those Allies they hailed as from heaven—they even saw a similarity between the name of the leading general of the Allied forces, Allenby, with their word for a delivering prophet * AnNeby and, truth be told, that man and his associates appreciated the humble folk in whose territory they victoriously stalked.

But came the greedy politicians, the sappers and miners of European quarrel, also those who sell into slavery, the book-keepers and the financiers, and they passed sentence on the near-corpse of Palestine—prostrate to its friends as it had not been even to its previous foes. "Came," I say, the politicians and with black magic of

* Spelled Al-neby, pronounced An-neby.

phrases, state papers and judicious forgettings—"Came" and decided:

First: to call the people "Arabs," a name now fervently accepted by the natives to point their struggle and their solidarity with Asia, since Europe has so mistreated them.

Second: to declare the land empty though it has always had its fair quota of people.

Third: To call it practically forfeit in the one-sided interpretation of even so generous a document as the Balfour Declaration.

Fourth: To let it out to European "improvements" (God save the mark!)

Fifth: To allow it to become lawful (European law!) prey to heavily subsidized refugees from Europe whom Europeans would not receive within their own bounds.

Sixth: To call any opposition to themselves seditious, terroristic, the work of *effendiyeh,* white collar, absentees, etc. etc. though the much belabored *effendiyeh* could not possibly head off or stop the despairing defense of homeland by the peasants.

And these people of Palestine are defending their dearest right on earth. They have for years sought to do so by delegation, representation, pleading. Heavily taxed, unrepresented, with no wealth, no press-service, or publicity, they are at the mercy of the whim of those who want their land, who follow a policy destructive of their peace and prosperity, who bribe their poverty in land-purchase and take that land off from a free market, who intern, deport, exile every effective protester of the horrible "experiment."

The truth of the case of the Palestinian farmer, village dweller and citizen is only just now emerging in spite of powerful influences interested in keeping it back or misrepresenting it. So greatly do certain outsiders covet Palestine that they even think they clearly see the facts other than they are or have been these hundreds and thousands of years and even at the present moment. No where on earth is black more often called white than nowadays in and about Palestine.

Law, logic, right, every decent convention—history itself, gives the land to its own people.

Let others be courteous guests, pilgrims, worshippers but let no queer canons of behavior make us think we can outrage the amenities over there.

How was it for the century before the Great World War? Let us go back to those years in order to see the normal conditions before the frenzy. How were travel, pilgrimage, business, ideals met then by the native population? Palestine's people would handle all those problems now much better with a decent measure of independence than they did before the war in their dependence. And we should have peace with honor, visit the shrines and have one place uncontaminated by western quarrels and chicanery. Christian, Moslem, and Jew would each fare better than in the proposed mess to which the Mandate has been heading.

Some one is sure to ask "What of the religions in Palestine" and almost as sure to forget a moment after being told. 100,000 native Christians in villages and cities, farmers, merchants, many of them highly cultivated. Will the world remember that? The native Christian of Palestine, descendant of original Christians

of Jesus' own day in Jesus' own land and the country where He was put to death for truth, this native Christian of Palestine is the most often forgotten man in all the modern world. Many, most of his brethren, same blood and race and appearance, changed to the Muhammadan religion over 1300 years ago and still live there. Jews, you ask? Yes there were about 75,000 of them in the country before the World War and nowhere in the world were they more safe or decently treated. But at that time they followed their religion and had not reached out the hand for sovereign worldly power. And I firmly believe that the highest grade Jews today, the world around, believe that the status was better before the World War than since. I have many Jewish acquaintances of that persuasion.

Wouldn't it be better for the true Jew to go as a devout pilgrim to the shrines of his faith, to migrate to the land itself as a citizen if and when he wished, and be saved the awful incubus of materialism, the machine-made political Zionism, the brassy propaganda, the loud, stentorian demand for exclusive rights? Why should he ignore the title of devout Christians,

devout Moslems, the comparative calm under the previous governmental and social set-up of hundreds of years which saw no such horrors as those now being enacted largely because he is there and the manner in which he has come there? He may have his University, his medical and humanitarian service, his decent business, his youth movement, his idealism, his religion, his soul which he is fast selling for Esau's mess of political pottage.

Awake, England!

ENGLAND! Where thousands live who, or whose kindred, have served over there in decent Christian ways these scores of years, who know the East, the Arab, who have bred such as Lawrence of Arabia, Hogarth of the Bodleian, Palmer and Allenby. And to mention one living among thousands, who, thank God, appreciate the native Arab position, Richmond, whose article please read in the February 1938 issue of *The Nineteenth Century and After,* Vol. CXXII, p. 186-192.

Now look at the thousands of photographs of your "authorities" in Palestine, today, of evictions and dynamiting, with accompaniments of machine-gunning, bayonetting, tanks, planes, gas, bombs, and starvation. Some of your representatives you would not trust in your stable. Yet you let them carry your name and fame among the peasants of a usually peaceable land which you are turning into a daily horror, while you lift your palms upward and outward when the owner of a few feddans, a few tools, a cow, a pair of goats, perchance sheep and chickens,

or a plot of vineyard, when he strikes in his misery at his tormentors paid from the taxes you wring from him.

One of your scions, officer in a district, told me that one of his concerns was to obliterate the native guest-rooms in the villages, *mudaffiehs,* humble centres of fraternity and democracy, because he considered them seditious, harmful to the empire. That is tearing the ewe lamb apart and not even eating it decently.

I could draw you pictures and have before of scenes, places, and people in Palestine, as dear, simple, and sweet as any in your fair England. But that would be pre-war. And the resentment that has burned in those places recently is not a "circumstance," as we say colloquially, to what would have happened in Somerset if half of the wrongs had been perpetrated there by an insider or an outsider. One of your own assured me of this five years ago and Lo, and behold, your artistry of misery since!

And consider the provocation in Palestine in twenty years past, in twenty months past. Even today I could point you to places in Palestine where your "experiment" has scarce touched as

yet and where you might observe a measure of the peace and kindness among the natives which we knew thirty or more years ago.

A dear, good, saintly Christian from the midst of peace-loving England said to me concerning one of my own native pupils in Palestine "We fear he is not loyal." Loyal to what? To the Empire? To a tormenter that he was trained to view was a civilized force in the world long before it turned persecutor with its "experiments" and to what end, native welfare? That savors of the remark of an Irish officer in service in Palestine to one of the native nobility there charged with office, a man educated and qualified by years of European training to serve any good cause or purpose in the Moslem East. Charged by this Irishman, with being too sympathetic with the peasantry of the district!! with being less than fully loyal to the despoiling busybody busy with his papers, white, or other shade. Remember a few years ago when a white paper showed merciful comprehension of the aggravated native state of affairs in Palestine that it was officially pigeon-holed? Under what pressure?

Oh, England, you are not fair to the England we admired. You are not frank, you are not English: at least in Palestine. Do you shudder for Abyssinia, for Spain, for China? What about Palestine!?! There are those among the thousands in Syria, refugees from Palestine, or among the hundreds of good Palestinian brains in other countries who could help you learn a truer function for young educated Palestinians.

Once it was the *wawy* (jackal) whose bark we heard in the vineyards. Now it would be the bark and rattle of deadly weapons. Once it was the hyena prowling for dead flesh. Now it is those who provide death daily for the contest, the race between the scavenger and the family of the dead who at their peril seek the bodies of their dead after the official strafing by your orders. Once it was the *kilmy frangieh* and veneration by those Easterners who admired you. Still it is the *kilmy frangieh* but with a difference in those "holy fields!"

I've seen the vultures, filthy, stealthily approaching a dead donkey. They need not feed on donkey flesh today.

How you love those humble folk, native

Christians and native Moslems! How you love persecuted Jews! You and other nations proved that at Evian les Bains, didn't you? You say "all the nations did," Yes, but under your sole control is the sovereign remedy proposed at Evian, to wit, that the victims of European meanness be sent to Palestine. In other words that the Holy Land of Christians, Moslems and Jews be liquidated to make a graveyard of all three.

What of the world's pious pilgrims who would fain go annually to the one country of peace and sacred memories? Do you remember the stream? Why did you launch the devastating "experiment?" Why do you continue it? Are you mystified by the changes in Palestine since 1916-17? Can you not detect each step that has led to the present ruin? Would you dare ask your neighbors? Will you ever find a more dependable friend or ally than the Arab, any Arab? Remember your vast Arabic learning, memories, scholarly works, statesmen, many highly trained Christian orientalists to this very hour? Do you remember and will you use?

As the season of "grapes" returns to Pales-

tine, August and later, season of gladness, will you be treading the wine-press over there or what representatives of yours will be treading? Who will be under your feet? What color will your feet be?

Have you assayed the necessity for all this? Have you reckoned with the end? Will you be proud of the result? Who as effectively as yourself has chastised the Holy Land and its rightful people? If you import another people there by any specious title will you chastise them the same way in the interests of

PEACE:
YOU, CAESAR: WHAT OF THE PAX BRITTANICA,
LATELY, NOW?
PEACE!

Is it Palestine you dearly love, or Mosul, or India, or Suez, and even they, why do you love them so? Are you truly loving and loyal to England. You emancipator of the blacks! And your pride, the not-nice manner in which you bandy the word "native." * Was that the reason for

Note the unpleasant use of the term "white" as if forgetting that the native Christian and Moslem population of Palestine is

championing wholesale immigration of aliens with shreds of title 2000 years old!

Are Palestinians bad people? Do you really think that these despoiled peasants are terrorists? Do you remember any terrors visited upon them since 1914? Do you remember the exultation with which they welcomed you and your message of fairness, of peace, of reverence in 1917? Some of your dead would remember and do. Are there not sufficient living who remember, who worship, who understand?

Besides the Palestine of place, there is the Palestine of dream and it is the Palestine of dream with which all mortals may rightfully be concerned. When outsiders come to grips with the Palestine of place then strange iniquities ensue. Test this as you will at any time in the experiences of the past.

What of the incongruity of the foreign office meddling with the Palestine of place, or the Colonial office, or any bureau and I except none:

Caucasian: e. g. last three ¶s in an article in The (London) Times for May 18, 1925 under *"Imperial and Foreign News. The Policing of Palestine: British Liability.* (From our special correspondent recently in Palestine.)"

then begins misery and mockery. The heart of the meddler becomes dry and hard; the very health of the native custodian of that soil goes glimmering to a sickness worse than the enterics of which we have knowledge.

Where else in this troubled world are the faiths of mankind so inextricably bound? Where else is there so providential an opportunity for non-aggression? for *noblesse oblige*? Let the chaffering in Palestine real estate cease. Let the western bribery of the impecunious farmer of that country stop forthwith! Decency commands it.

Holy cities, material shrines, are notoriously offensive when venal considerations obtain. Outsiders beware! When your patient dreams go on to the registry of real estate titles and you seek to close your fist over a parcel of ground for selfish gratification you have seared your soul beyond hope of sweetness or idealism.

The sword may be offensive but the pen of the realist has been even more terrible a horror in Palestine, the Holy Land. Look at it today! Let those who know tell you how it was in the yesterday before the World War! What human

would say that today could compare with yesterday? The Turk was a dreamer, a poet, a philosopher, a saint compared with certain so-called statesmen, certain political meddlers of the past twenty years. Read the travel literature of fifty or a hundred years preceding 1917, and con the reiteration of peccadilloes, amusing contretemps, despised chicaneries along the tourist routes, guides, shrines, pretense and crass materialism and then compare the atrocities of the last few years in European mal-administration in Palestine. The pre-war trivialities are as the errant ways of sparrows compared with the work of tigers, hyenas, and vultures.

YOU will find that your interests are nearer to each other than to any European political state or any outside interest whatsoever. In race, religion, language, and devotion to oriental causes, including any land, you would do well to counsel together without European prejudice. The Arab makes a better friend than any of the Western peoples. You cannot ignore his historical, cultural, geographical or economic claims except at your peril. Be advised. The Arab will not be hoodwinked or cowed.

It is not a question of Semitic or anti-Semitic since both parties to the conflict are Semitic, Arabs and Jews, and the Arabs are more Semitic than present-day European Jews.

It is not a question of race or religion for Arabs and Jews are in those respects cousinly.

It is a question of economics. It is a property question. It is a question of possession, of home and homeland. During the last thirteen hundred years the native Arab, Palestine population has held this as his homeland with one brief interruption during the Crusades and their mistakes.

The Jews have rationalized a pretentious prior claim which cannot hold in the economic field and would you say that a purely religious claim goes in for effective real estate claims and political control? What about this strange alchemy? You want what you want when and where you want it? That is understandable, but are you going about it in the right way?

The Land No One Forgets

RIGHT in the centre of the thoughts of many millions far away from it and who may never see it, sits Palestine between the Mediterranean and the Jordan and between the Lebanon Mountains and the Egyptian Delta. It is tiny and just now tempestuous. No one of the great Semitic, Greek, Roman faiths forgets it and the officials of all these are likely to try to take a hand in controlling it. Its proper population has been agricultural for thousands of years, five thousand surely, and probably double that length of time. Every nation except the Chinese and Japanese has been interested in it and most have tried to bring pressure upon it. Many have waged war in it, against it, or because of it, and yet its own people would ask to be let alone to live and to let live and even help to live. But no, stronger forces than the native people insist every now and again on taking it out upon its own hills and crucifying it.

German and Turk, British and Latin have struggled there and the poor peasantry has been

blighted and taxed and bled and raped and then at last held up to disadvantageous comparison with other peoples from Europe. And now because its independence has been denied to it and because it suits the convenience of selfish Powers, it is proposed that the afflicted refugees of the Majority of sufferers from Continental Europe shall be sent in overwhelming numbers to burden the suffering land. A measure of relief might have been afforded to the European sufferers until the immigrants amounted to ten or twenty per cent of the resident population of Palestine but no, no sooner was the door of Palestine forced open by League Mandate and British arms to admit Jewish needy folk than it was fiercely contended that the country actually ought to be owned by Jews and that they should come until they outnumbered the natives.

The trouble in Palestine today is directly traceable to the announced determination of Jews to fill the country and rule it. Is that the proper spirit and method of refugees seeking asylum? And by what subtlety did the need for a haven, a home, become the demand for politi-

cal control of the whole country and its population?

Too many proposals, too many arguments, too many Jews have been mixed in the Palestine situation. Issues have been confused, trails have been criss-crossed, all nature and all logic have been flouted. It simply wont do. It will not work. If the attempt to plant a new people in the old country had had merit sufficient, why, surely the last twenty years, the flowing millions of western money and the bayonets and other forces of Britain by land, sea and air would by this time have succeeded. But they have not.

A farmer population loving its lands: A city population proud of its heritage: These and the religious as well as economic passions of the Palestine people will not permit their destruction at the hands of Europe. And if these facts are not very soon recognized then other Asiatic and even African forces may be drawn into the conflict to make Europe wish it had never attempted the rape of Palestine.

Would it not be a reasonable conjecture that anyone or all of the countries whose delegates met at Evian les Bains would be able to take a

few Jews, perhaps many Jews, from the places which are persecuting them? Will those countries do so? Or will they continue to urge that tiny Palestine take an extraordinary percentage of refugees against the life, interest, and well-being of the native population?

Call them Arabs in Palestine or what you will. The truth is that the majority of them are farmers and that they have been citizens of country or town since the middle of the seventh century of our era.

What answer can be given to the following? The Jew was well treated in Palestine, as well treated as any newcomer to the country before this political, mandated Balfour Declaration and the recent partition proposals. All troubles have come since the widely published intention of the Jewish Societies to take over the country on the grounds of their ancient interest, their present funds and their superior civilization. These intentions and claims have stirred the bitterest resentment of the inhabitants.

In very ancient times Egypt had to be inoculated and taught war for many centuries before the virus was seated and how eagerly the better

folk unlearned the bitter lessons and harked back to works of genius in irrigation, engineering, the lessons of the river and its seasons. With a food supply that was dependable, even laid by in storage, how rapidly did writing, medicine, mathematics, and the arts rise to supreme importance! Of Babylonia, of Crete, of Greece, of Syria the same may be said at the risk of having apparent exceptions brought to our notice. The bickerings of inordinate trade and of the various piracies to which humanity yields as to its latent craving for all forms of gambling, these invite that grosser competition which is incipient war. Commercial extremists who wished to cut across the artistic impulse in human productivity and slash out a larger profit more speedily, who wished as racketeers to take toll of other people's industry, these bred the excessively devastating wars of antiquity as perhaps today.

Now those lands to be sure are not necessarily peopled today by the same races as at other times in their deep-reaching past which we call history but neither are they hopelessly devoid of similarly sensitive folk ready to spring into in-

tellectual leadership when this battling world of politics permits them that breathing space which is the pre-requisite of creative dreaming and thinking. The common people of those lands are peace-lovers as why should not the worst war-bitten peoples of all the world be? Democracy, prophecy, poetry, oratory, art and the arts were born over there and have intermitted only when quarreling and greed burned their grounds. Farmers, gardeners, orchardists, trade-folk, caravan-leaders, pilgrims, and devotees of learning and the sciences. What have we here unless it be people who are the fruitage of peace and peaceable pursuits as well as cravers of the same!

Bound in Levant

As we often see books bound in the sumptuous leather called Levant, a goat skin of extra quality smoothness and beauty, sometimes called Morocco, so we see the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean, fine of grain, tough in resistance, and often beautiful even in their misfortunes, bound by those sun-rising, eastern, that is to say Levantine shores. If the word-play be not too egregious, we shall continue to think of the similarity of those rare lands, the birthlands of books, to books themselves. What a reading lesson, what rare stories of humanity and its world of the a-literate as well as of literature is open to the honest mind as it scans the regions where humans found themselves, came to themselves, and recorded their deepest experiences by help of alphabet, chisel, and brush!

Egypt, Crete, Greece, Asia Minor (Anatolia, Turkey), Syria, Palestine, Arabia and even by not too great extension of humane interest, Mesopotamia. And once we are permitted to go so far, why, of course, Middle Asia, Persia and

India come into view, birthlands they, also, of that marvelous self-consciousness in the best sense which with memory, and creative, anticipating imagination seems to mark off the human from all other sentient life.

Reflections

WHEN the farmers of Deir Liwan call themselves "Arabs" that name which is the now dominant vogue in Near Asia promises a rallying cry that will give body to the dream of scores of young men who have tasted the dishes of the West, of Europe and America, as well as those of their own native country, Palestine.

The word of the Westerner—the *kilmy frangieh* has lost much of its value in their estimation—once it was the best promise in the world. But these young men have learned in many schools, all Western, since then, how variable that word can be and they are now thrown back upon the words and ways of their homeland.

Once upon a time their fathers boasted foolishly as it then seemed of the *jezirat-el-Arab,* its wide spaces, its long marches, its camel trains, its holy places, its superb language, its great miracle of the Holy Book, the *Koran,* of heroes and heroines, of armies, swords, horses, yes those horses, and songs about all these. The youths listened with tingling nerves and flash-

ing eyes. On the other hand had not certain cousins been in America whence came more easy money than the village has ever seen sprout from any other ground? America the fabulous land of quick earnings grew upon the imagination of all Palestinians. Hundreds of Syrians who were the pioneers in that migration to the Americas were followed by thousands and now there were tens of thousands from the Near East in the West. Results: Oh they were tangible, but not altogether satisfying. There were scores of huge stone houses in the village. Many of these were idle, others but partly used. Big "American" houses were no novelties. All the neighbor villages had them and the story was the same everywhere; expensive structures, showy in their glistening white and gray and pink—for they were of good native limestone and there were iron balustrades and railings and even brass knobs and good curtains and hangings. But when it came to carpets, why, where in the world could better than Eastern rugs be had? It took only a few Western imitations to show the superiority of the oriental carpets. And even an aniline-dyed oriental, such as

the looms were producing, was much better than the machine-made European rugs.

Perhaps it was those oriental rugs that made some of the new-rich migratory Palestinians think more carefully of the contrasts between the West and the East. The irregular pattern and design of a true rug of the Oriental showing life and variety in the very disposal of the threads leads a thinking person to compare other products of the far-away with the goods of the homeland. In the important matter of food every country has its favorites. So humble a staple as the native cheese for instance; but where is there a better, tastier cheese than that of goat's milk made right here in the land, *jiben,* the flavor of which is one of the earliest memories on the tongue of Palestine boys who of late have been stranded in Chicago, perhaps, or some worse place?

Cigarettes, cigars, and strong pipes are easier had in Europe or America, but oh, the solace of the bottle of water with its fragrant *tumbak* and charcoal atop, with its long cool tube of smoke and the philosophy of the ancients while the smokers talk in oriental fraternity!

Bath-tubs and showers and all the intricacies of plumbing even when in good repair, yes some of these improvements had been installed in certain of the better "American houses" in the home village, for the early enthusiasts were greatly daring as well as greatly imitative. But what could be more comforting than a tin of cistern or, better, spring water, precious because rarer, not metered but nevertheless measured?

Automobiles, new, almost new, and decrepit, scorch the roads of Palestine and there are good roads there, but oh the meaningless haste and waste! Better, quiet, narrow paths among the vineyards, piercing the hills and terraces where donkey, horse or foot travel give one leisure to commune with sunrise and sunset, with all the moods of Nature, time to learn one's own mind. Clothes! Well, there, all agree with us when we exclaim at the tortures of western clothes and compare them with oriental costume. Lin Yu Tang, the Chinese, has proven his case in that matter and the Near East too can rest its case, the case of Asia, East or West.

The East will imitate, absorb and at the last spew forth the crazy entertainment of the West.

There is nothing really new in that either, East or West. Excess never agrees with humans and rational humanity will eschew it as the Orient did long ago. "Whom the Gods would destroy they first make mad" and only those marked for destruction will persist in folly. It was someone very near the East, an Ancient Greek, who gave the Hellenic world its most valuable motto, "nothing too much."

When Europe brought its most brutal war to Asia and defiled the land of Palestine, its women and its men, in the interests of a great commercial quarrel, then it seemed as if materialism had done its worst to uglify the world. A few westerners, Lawrence preeminent, still proved that the west had a soul. Then the politicians and hucksters of hypocrisies and empire broke his heart, fair warning to all western dreamers. But the East kept on dreaming. And the dream was far finer than the bad dreams from Europe. It was a dream of a united Arab people. The Turks who are not Arabs dreamed effectively for themselves. Egypt turned in its bed. Iraq awoke and the Hijaz fought close up to its dreaming.

Syria at one end and Yemen at the other end, of the north and south axis of the Arab world, yearn and achieve. But poor little Palestine, that tiny fragment, that seed of seeds, and dream of dreams, Palestine was tossed from arm to arm and hand to hand, to be browbeaten, crushed, bedevilled by all grades of meddlers and pretenders. Its soil was considered holy by more people than Europe would have held comfortably, but here the pretenders focussed greedy gaze and striking fist on a little land of farms. The farmers, of all people, were bidden to go to the deserts to their cousins in the sand! Gardeners were to be doomed to barren wastes whose scarce oases were already over-spoken for! And God laughed!

That huge oblong land of Arabia that hangs obliquely between Asia and Africa and is about one-third the size of the United States. That majestic waste has fertile edges on the oceans and rivers and is occasionally spotted, even inland, with fertile dots which we call oases. And Palestine, with Syria, makes one of the fertile borders. It was conquered according to the rule of nations 1300 years ago by Moslem expan-

sionists from Mecca. Jerusalem became one of the three exceedingly holy shrines of Islam. The farmer population there fell from under the weak hand of the Byzantines and away from the threats of Persia and became politically what it was geographically, a dependent part of the forming Arabian world-power. Except for the European interruption of the Crusades, Palestine has been Arabian ever since 632 A. D., a long time!

Not all the farmers and citizens of Palestine became followers of Muhammad and Islam. Many thousands remained Christians as before. It had not been Jewish since the Roman Emperor Hadrian and certainly not since Constantine. Even today, of its former Christian population, Palestine retains a hundred thousand of its ancient Christian believers. These are the great facts which the world of today conveniently, or lazily forgets. For, of the million inhabitants in the country at the end of the World War, there were as many Christians as Jews. The remaining majority were Moslems, descendants, very largely, of the ancient Christians of the country but converted in the sweep-

ing conquests of the Arabs. They were but slightly, and that in the cities mainly, tinged in their original Canaanite blood by transfusion from Arabs. Of course the culture and discipline rapidly took on Arabian coloration and under the Caliphs of Mecca, Damascus, Baghdad, the dominance of the Arab mentality was unquestioned. This was fortunate for civilization since Europe at that time was in the sink and slump of the Dark Ages, forgetting its former civilization and manners. In the Arabic language the intellectual treasures of Europe of the past were talked and written. Aristotle, for example, was caught up and preserved in the Arabian tongue.

Arab research and practice were fruitful in the fields of mathematics, medicine, law, geography, and belles lettres. There were hospitals, schools, universities, foundations, pilgrimages, commercial enterprises, brilliant court circles and stern mental clinics of the philosophers made the respectable, even glorious mental world of those centuries. The West forgets all this but the East remembers. And when Europe

or America uses "Arab" as a deprecatory term, intelligence despairs of being understood.

And what of the Jew? He as well as the Christian fared well at the hands and at the courts of the better Moslem potentates. Jews with their marvelous mental fecundity wrote in both Arabic and Hebrew and helped push forward the boundaries of science and learning. The persecutor of the Jew is usually a Christian, not a Moslem, with certain rare exceptions. There is much affinity of Jew and Moslem and up to the time of the World War there was no safer place in the world for the Jew than in Moslem Palestine. And how have certain Jews changed all that!

I knew Palestine from 1901 to 1904, one of the world's treasures of unaffected simplicity. It was holy ground to tens of thousands of travelers, and scores of thousands more of devout pilgrims who came from three of the world's religious faiths. We valued it because it was different from all lands. Being tiny it did not seem unreasonable that it might be left alone as a reserve, a country of shrines, of antiquities, a museum of folk-ways, which were

fast disappearing from more sophisticated countries. Not only was the country little but its rare acres of garden fertility and its many miles of sterile hillside were well adapted to the population of the very ancient habitat. That population is largely Canaanite with some infusion of Arab. It is the same basic population that has been lodged there for five thousand and many more years. I believe that it is practically continuous with the historic and the pre-historic peoples of the same region. That basic folk which may as well be called Canaanite as anything else is native to the soil in a way and manner similar to the adaptation to be noted in Egypt, in China, and in a few other examples. It was on the basis of that fundamental ground-stock that the changes, incursions, raids, and conquests of many ages have taken place or been enforced. Hittite, Hyksos, Aramean, Syrian, Arabian, have affected the racial stock somewhat. Between the times of the last two the Hebraic clans entered Palestine and out of that Hebraic evolved the Jewish of old with which the European Jewish is at least culturally connected. Near the time of the Hebrew con-

quest of part of the country was another conquest in the Western borders of Palestine by a Western folk known as Philistines and these were the people important enough to give the name of Palestine to the whole land even to this day.

The Canaanite persists however and the intruders fade out or fall away. Even after the great Arabian conquest the resultant population is more characteristically Canaanite than Arab. And we have not so far to look to see what the European Crusaders and the Asiatic Turks did to the racial stock as well as to the little country of Palestine. The people today, outside of the cities, are mostly farmers as they have always been.

It was this farmer population that was overrun, raped, and left gasping by the ambitions and brutalities of the World War. There is not much to choose among meddlers with the comparative peace that was Palestine. It was European expansion and bitter conflict that scorched the pastures, the grain fields, the gardens, the villages, the valleys, the peasantry of Palestine.

Bread, clothing, health, were made exceed-

ingly scare by these European barbarians with their minds on Baghdad, the Suez Canal, the gamble of honor and virtue and super-passion. And Palestine had to take it. Since then there has been broken word, broken Arabia, Mandate, Balfour Declaration and at long last, an electrified wire fence stretched across the northern edge of Palestine where it would otherwise join Syria. Oh crucifixion, Oh, folly! What next? Why not let the people of the country have their country with a minimum of meddling? Let them cultivate their wheat, their olives, their figs, grapes, flocks and their children. Let them follow their faiths and let the nations of the world accept reverently and modestly guest privileges to visit the shrines of Palestine.

Europe and America are forging anew the sword of Allah, sharpening the edge, and turning it westward instead of eastward.

The Arab makes an honorable friend. His word and his partisanship are being trifled with. Along with the other white peoples he might teach Europe to be fair to the people of color. He is the best mediator between the East and the West.

The Arab has become super-conscious of his culture and his past, of his boundaries and of the proper limits of his coming empire. Naturally democratic and individualistic he is being compacted by the foolish policy of Europe. He places between Europe and Asia because he is so largely European in his sympathy and so understanding of Asia.

People who have read but little history since Bible times seem to have an idea that the countries of the Near East are empty, or nearly so, and that their inhabitants might not find it too inconvenient to remove to some other place or country not clearly indicated. Such persons often ask what the people of Palestine are called and when told "Palestinians" find that a meaningless answer. "Syrian" means more to them, "Egyptian" even more, "Turk" though of an entirely different race seems also to have significance. Syria lies to the north of Palestine and Egypt is south. Similarly when the present-day people of the modern kingdom of Iraq, where old Mesopotamia was located, call themselves Irakians one may suppose that the name means little to the average person here in the

West who doesn't know that Iraq is a mediaeval name of country that was once Assyria and Babylonia.

A very great convenience lies in the custom which has grown up of calling all the people of the Near East who use the Arabian tongue in any form of dialect—Arabs, no matter what their race. So there need be less surprise today if an Irakian, an Egyptian, a Syrian, or a Palestinian glories in the name "Arab."

The Arab like us westerners has genius for missionarying and for raiding. He remembers the Middle Ages and the scope of Arab campaigns, Arab tongue, Arab zeal. He has seen an undue shrinkage of lands pertaining to that glorious age of expansion. He certainly counts the peninsula (*jezirat*) and all its edges as Arab and he knows that even Europe will do well to beware of meddling with lands so hardly won and so long held.

Jewish rights to Palestine lapsed between 136 and 1920 A. D. Practically the whole length of time of the Christian era. Jewish claims to the country are historically B. C. It is quite the

vogue to ignore the Christian Arab and to slander the Moslem Arab.

In the volume *Jews and Arabs in Palestine,* 1936, edited by Sereni and Ashery—p. 17a. the British are sneered at as selfish exploiters of Jews. In this Introduction, the Jewish writers envisage a war between Arab and Jew in Palestine and take certain satisfaction in their own good chances, and this in a land into which most of them have only recently come. In quoting (p. 43a) Weizmann, the delicious fantasy is indulged that the Arabs shall live among the Jews in Palestine! That Jews should live along with or among the majority, twice their number (and rights), is not contemplated. Thus did the fermentation of the notion of a Jewish National Home into a Jewish National State go to the head.

If Europe betrays the oriental then the oriental will cease to trust Europe or to sit at the feet of Europe as a teacher, and though admiring, will fear. Gradually the people of nearer Asia will learn that their salvation is very largely from and within themselves. They will turn from the unfavorable comparison which they

were wont to make of themselves and their ways with the powerful, the rich Westerner and will re-learn their own resources. It is always thus. The old man sitting in reflection tells the boys buoyantly setting forth to the wonders elsewhere that there are quite satisfactory values in the nearby and the customary. Later the boy confesses that it is even so as the old man said. The boy becomes patriotic.

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